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TALMAGE.

"The Despotism of the Needle, or a Discourse on Woman's Wages."

The Oppressed and the Oppressors in
the World's Broad Field of
Battles.

Idleness is Unwholesome and Industry is
Healthful, but Bondage Makes
Life a Most Heavy
Burden.

BROOKLYN, N. Y., May 24.—Dr. Talmage
preached in the Brooklyn Tabernacle this
morning on the subject, "The Despotism of
the Needle, or a Discourse on Woman's
Wages." Before the sermon Dr. Talmage
explained the Epistle of James where it says,
"Be not many masters," which he said was a
reproof for those who are disposed to be
bossy in their disposition. The opening
hymn was:

"Mid scenes of confusion and creature
complaints,
How sweet to my soul is communion of saints!"

The text was from Ecclesiastes, iv. 1.
"I returned and considered all the oppressions
that are now done under the sun, and behold
the tears of the oppressed, and they had no
comforter; and on the side of their oppressors
there was power."

Following is the sermon in full:

Very long ago the needle was busy.
It was considered honorable for women to toil
in olden times. Alexander the Great stood
in his palace, showing garments made by his
own mother. The finest tapestries of Bayeux
were made by the Queen of William the
Conqueror. Augustus, the Emperor, would
not wear any garments except those that
were fashioned by some member of his royal
family. So let the toiler everywhere be re-
spected! The needle has slain more than the
sword. When the sewing machine was in-
vented some thought that invention would
alleviate woman's toil and put an end to the
despotism of the needle. But, no! while the
sewing machine has been a great blessing to
well-to-do families in many cases, it has
added to the stab of the needle the crush of
the wheel, and multitudes of women, not-
withstanding the reinforcement of the sewing
machine, can only make, work hard as
they will, between two and three dollars
per week.

THE GREATEST BLESSING
that could have happened to our first pa-
rents was being turned out of Eden after
they had done wrong. Adam and Eve, in
their perfect state, might have got along
without work, or only such slight employ-
ment as a perfect garden with no weeds in
it demanded. But as soon as they had sinned,
the best thing for them was to be turned out
where they would have to work. We know
what a withering thing it is for a man to
have nothing to do. Old Ashbel Green, at
four-score years, when asked why he kept on
working, said: "I do so to keep out of mis-
chief." We see that a man who has a large
amount of money to start with has no chance.
Of the thousand prosperous and hono-
rable men that you know, nine hundred
and ninety-nine had to work vigor-
ously at the beginning. But I am now to
tell you that industry is just as important
for a woman's safety and happiness. The
most unhappy women in our communities to-
day are those who have no engagements to
call them up in the morning; who once hav-
ing risen and breakfasted, lounge through
the dull forenoon in slippers down at the
heel and with disheveled hair, reading Out-
let's last novel, and who, having dragged
through a wretched forenoon and taken their
afternoon sleep, and having passed an hour
and a half at the toilet, pick up their card-
case and go out to make calls, and when
their evenings waiting for somebody to come
in and break up the monotony. Arabella
Stuart never was imprisoned in so dark a
dungeon as that.

THERE IS NO HAPPINESS IN AN IDLE WOMAN.
It may be with hand, it may be with brain,
it may be with both; but work she must, or
be wretched forever. The little girls of our
families must be started with that idea. The
curse of our American society is that our
young women are taught that the first, sec-
ond, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh,
tenth, fiftieth, thousandth thing in their life
is to get somebody to take care of them. In-
stead of that the first lesson should be how
under God, they may take care of themselves.
The simple fact is, that a majority of them
do have to take care of themselves, and that,
too, after having, through the false notions
of their parents, wasted the years in which
they ought to have learned how successfully
to maintain themselves. We now and then
declare the inhumanity, cruelty and outrage
of that father and mother who pass their
daughters into womanhood, having given
them no facility for earning their livelihood.
Madame de Staël said: "It is not these
writings that I am proud of, but the fact that
I have facility in ten occupations, in any
one of which I could make a livelihood."

You say you have a fortune to leave them.
O man and woman, have you not learned
that like vultures, like hawks, like eagles,
riches have wings and fly away? Though you
should be successful in leaving a competency
behind you the trickery of executors may
swamp it in a night, or some officials in our
churches may get up a mining company and
induce your orphans to put their money
into a hole in Colorado; and if, by the most
skillful machinery, the sunken money can
not be brought up again, prove to them that
it was eternally decreed that that was the
way they were to lose it, and that it went in
the most orthodox and heavenly style. Oh,
the damnable schemes that professed Chris-
tians will engage in—until God puts his
fingers into the collar of the hypocrite's robe
and rips it clear down to the bottom you have
no right because you are well off to conclude
that your children are going to be as well off
as a man died leaving a large fortune. His
old comrades came in and said as they bent
over his corpse: "What is the matter with
you, Boggess?" The surgeon standing over
him said: "Hush up! He is dead!" "Oh, he
is dead!" they said. "Come, boys, let's
go and take a drink in memory of poor
Boggess!"

HAVE YOU NOTHING BETTER THAN MONEY
to leave your children? If you have not, but
send your daughters into the world with
empty brains and unskilled hands, you are
guilty of assassination, homicide, regicide,
infanticide. There are women toiling in our
cities for two and three dollars per week who
were the daughters of merchant princes.
These suffering ones now would be glad to
have the crumbs that once fell from their
father's table. That worn out, broken shoe

that the wears is the lineal descendant of
the twelve dollar gaiters in which her
mother walked, and that torn and faded
calico had ancestry of magnificent brocade
that swept Broadway clean without any
expense to the Street Commissioners. Though
you live in an elegant residence and are
sumptuously every day, let your daugh-
ters feel that it is a disgrace to them not to
know how to work. I denounce the idea
prevalent in society that though our young
women may embroider slippers and crochet
and make mats for lamps to stand on with-
out disgrace, the idea of doing anything for a
livelihood is dishonorable.

It is a shame for a young woman, belong-
ing to a large family, to be inefficient when
the father toils his life away for her support.
It is a shame for a daughter to be idle while
her mother toils at the wash-tub. It is as
honorable to sweep house, make beds or trim
hats as it is to twist a watch-chain. As far
as I can understand, the line of respectability
lies between that which is useful and that
which is useless. If women do that which is
of no value, their work is dishonorable. If they
do practical work, it is dishonorable. That
our young women may escape the curse of
doing dishonorable work I shall business-
ize. You may knit a tidy for the back of an
arm-chair, but by no means make the money
wherewith to buy the chair. You may, with
delicate brush, beautifully mantle ornament,
but rather than earn enough to buy a
marble mantle, you may learn artistic
manipulation and sell your work for a good
thing. "Orvilleville" or "Old Hundred." Do
nothing practical if you would in the eyes
of refined society preserve your respectability.

I count these final notions. I tell you a
woman must make a place in the world, and
occupy a place in this world before she can
rent for it. In the course of a lifetime you
consume whole harvests and droves of cattle,
and every day you live you breathe forty
bushels of good, pure air. You must, by
some kind of usefulness, pay for all this.
You are the last thing created on earth, and
fishes on the fourth day, the cattle and
birds on the fifth day, and man on the sixth
day. If geologists are right the earth was a
million of years in possession of the insects,
beasts and birds before our race came upon
it. In one sense we were innovators; the cat-
tle, the birds and the insects, but we have no
right. The question is not what we are to
do with the insects and summer insects, but
what the insects and summer insects are to
do with us.

MUST EARN YOUR POSITION.

If we want a place in this world we must
earn it. The partridge makes its own nest
before it occupies it. The lark, by its morn-
ing song, secures its breakfast before it eats
it. The Bible gives an intimation that the
first duty of an idler is to starve when it
says if he "will not work, neither shall he
eat." Idleness ruins the health, and very
soon nature says: "This man has refused to
pay his rent; with him. Society is to be
reconstructed on the subject of wages." It
tells a vast majority of those who would
have woman industrious, shut her up to a
few kinds of work. My judgment in the
matter is that a woman has a right to do
anything she can do well. There should be
no department of menial arts, mechanics,
art or science barred against her. If Horner
has a genius for sculpture, give her a chisel.
If Rosa Bonheur has a fondness for delineat-
ing animals, let her make the "Horse Fair."
If Miss Mitchell will study astronomy,
let her mount the stargazer. If Lydia will
be a merchant, let her sell purple. If Lucretia
Mott will preach the Gospel, let her thrill
with her womanly eloquence the Quaker meet-
ing-house.

It is said if woman is given such oppor-
tunities she will occupy places that might be
taken by men. I say if she have the right
and adaptedness for any position that a man
has, let her have it. She has as much right
to her bread, to her apparel and to her home
as men have. But it is said that her nature
is so delicate that she is unfitted for exhaust-
ing toil. I ask in the name of all past his-
tory what toil on earth is more severe, more
exhaustive and tremendous than that toil
of the needle to which for ages she has been
subjected? The battering-ram, the sword,
the carbine, the battle-axe have made no such
havoc as the needle. I would that these liv-
ing sculptures in which women have for
ages been busied might be opened that some
resurrection trumpet might bring up
these living corpses to the fresh air and sun-
light. Go with me and I will show you a
woman who by hardest toil supports her
children, and her drunken husband, her old
father and mother, pays her home rent,
always has wholesome food on her table, and
when she can get some neighbor on the Sab-
bath to come in and take care of her family,
appears in church with hat and cloak that
are far from indicating the toil to which she
is subjected.

Such a woman as that has body and soul
enough to fit her for any position. She could
stand beside the majority of your salesmen
and dispose of more goods. She could go
into your wheelwright shop and beat one
of your workmen at making carriages. We
talk about women as though we had signed
to her all the light work, and ourselves had
shouldered the heavier. But the day of
judgment, which will reveal the sufferings
of the stake and inquisition, will
marshal before the throne of God and the
battering-ram of his justice the women of
this world. Now, I say, if there be any
preference in occupation, let women have it.
God knows her trials are the severest. By her
acute sensitiveness to misfortune, by her
hour of anguish, I demand that no one hedge
up her pathway to a wellhead. Oh, the
wretchedness, the desirability of man who
arouse a woman the right to work anywhere
in any honorable calling.

GIVE WOMAN AN EQUAL SHOW.

I go still farther, and say that women
should have equal compensation with men.
By what principle of justice is it that women
in many of our cities get only two-thirds as
much pay as men, and in many cases only
half? Here is the "equal show" that we
offer for work equally well, if not better done.
Women receive far less compensation than men.
Start with the National Government. Women
clerks in Washington get \$900 for doing
that for which men receive \$1,800. The
wheel of oppression is rolling over the backs
of thousands of women who at this mo-
ment in despair about what they are to do.
Many of the large mercantile establish-
ments of our cities are accessory to these abomi-
nations, and from their large establishments
there are scores of souls being pitched off
into the sea, and the employer knows it. Is
there a God? Will there be a judgment? I
tell you if God rises up to redress woman's
wrong, many of our large establishments
will be swallowed up quicker than a South
American earthquake ever took down a city.
God will catch these oppressors between the
two millstones of his wrath and grind them
to powder!

Why is it that a female principal in a
school only gets \$850 for doing work for
which a male principal gets \$1,650? I hear
from all this land the wall of womanhood.
When nothing answers to that wall but
batteries. He says she is an angel. She is
not; he knows she is not. She is a human
being who gets hungry when she has no food
and cold when she has no fire. Give her no
flatteries; give her justice! There are 65,000
sewing girls in New York and Brooklyn.
Across the sunlight comes their death groan.
It is not such a cry as comes from those who
are suddenly hurried out of life, but a slow,
grinding, horrible wasting away. Gather
them before you and look into their faces.
Pinched, ghastly, hunger-struck! Look at
their fingers, needle-picked and blood-tipped!

See that premature stoop in the shoulders;
hear that dry, hacking, muffled cough!

AT A LARGE MEETING

of these women, held at a hall in Philade-
lphia, grand speeches were delivered, her a
needle-woman took the stand, threw aside
her faded shawl and with her shriveled arm
hurled a very thunderbolt of eloquence,
speaking out the horrors of her own expe-
rience. Stand at the corner of a street in
New York at 6 or 7 o'clock in the morning
as the women go to their work. Many of
them had no breakfast except the crumbs
that were left over from the night before or a
crust they chew on their way through the
street. Here they come! The working girls
of New York and Brooklyn! These engaged
in bread work there in flower-making, in mil-
linery, enameling, book-binding, book-
binding, labeling, feather picking, print coloring,
paper box making, but most overworked of
all and least compensated, the sewing wom-
en. Why do they not take the city cars
on the way up? They can not afford the five
cents. If, conceding to deny herself some-
thing else, she got into the car, she has a
fall! You want to see how Lattimer and
Ridley appeared by the fire: look at
that woman and behold a more hor-
rible martyrdom, a hotter fire, a more agonizing
death! Ask that woman how much she gets
for her work, and she will tell you six cents
for making coarse shirts, and finds her own throat!

Years ago, one Sabbath night, in the vest-
ibule of this church, after service, a woman
fell in convulsions. The pastor said she
needed medicine not so much as something
to eat. As she began to revive in her de-
lirium, she said, gaspingly: "Eight cents!
Eight cents! Eight cents! I wish I could get
it done! I am so tired! I wish I could get
some sleep; but I must get it done! Eight
cents! Eight cents! We found afterward
that she was making garments for eight
cents a piece, and that she could make about
three of them in a day. Hear it! Three
times eight are twenty-four. Hear it, men
and women who have comfortable homes.
Some of the worst villains of our cities are
the employers of these women. They bat-
tle on down to the last penny. And I tell
cheat them out of that. The woman must
deposit a dollar or two before she gets the
garments to work on. When the work is
done it is sharply inspected, the most in-
significant flaws picked out and the wages re-
fused, and sometimes the dollar deposited
not given back.

The Women's Protective Union reports a
case where one of these poor ones finding a
place where she could get more wages, re-
solved to change employers, and went to ge-
neral pay for work done. The employer says:
"Dear you are going to leave?" "Yes," she
said. "I have come to get what you owe me."
He made no answer. She said: "Are you
not going to pay me?" "Yes," he said, "I
will pay you," and he kicked her down
stairs.

Oh, that Women's Protective Union, 19
Clinton Place, New York! Its blessing of
Heaven be on it for the merciful and divine
work it is doing in the defense of toiling wo-
manhood. What tragedies of suffering are
presented to them day by day. A paragraph
from their report:

"Can you make Mr. Jones pay me? He
owes me for three weeks at two dollars and
a half a week, and I can't get anything, and
my child is very sick." The speaker, a young
woman, lately widowed, burst into a flood
of tears as she spoke. She was bidden to
come again the next afternoon and repeat
her story to the attorney, but she was never
heard of again. Means were found by which Mr. Jones was induced
to pay the seven dollars and a half.

ANOTHER PARAGRAPH FROM THEIR REPORT.

"A fortnight had passed when she not-
estly hinted, desire to know how much
her services were worth. 'O, my dear,' he
replied, 'you are getting to be one of the
most valuable hands in the trade, you will
always get the very best prices. Ten dollars
a week you will be able to earn very easily.'
And the girl's fingers flew with her work
at a marvelous rate. The picture of \$10 a
week had almost turned her head. A few
nights later, while crossing the ferry, she
overheard the name of her employer in the
conversation of girls who stood near. 'What,
John Smith? Why does he pay her so much?'
'For him every time. He'll keep you on
trial' as he calls it for weeks, and then he'll
go and get some other fool.' And thus Jane
Smith gained her warning against the swin-
dler. But the union held him in the coils
of the law until he paid the worth of each
of these days of trial."

Another paragraph:
"Her mortification may be imagined when
told that one of the two five-dollar bills
which she had just received for her work
was counterfeit. But her mortification was
swallowed up in indignation. 'The man who
paid her having paid her the money and
insultingly asked her to prove it.' When
the Protective Union had placed this
matter in the courts the Judge said: 'You
will pay Eleanor the amount of her claim,
\$5.85, also the costs of the court.'
How are these evils to be eradicated? Some
say: 'Give women the ballot.' What
effect such ballot might have of other ques-
tions I am not here to discuss; but what
would be the effect of female suffrage on
woman's wages? I do not believe that woman
will ever get justice by woman's ballot. In-
deed, women oppress women as much as men
do. Do not women as much as men, beat
down to the lowest figure the woman who
sews for them? Are not women as sharp as
men on washerwomen and milliners and
mantle-makers? If a woman has a dollar
for her work, does not her female employer
ask her if she will not take ninety cents?
You say, 'Only ten cents difference;' but
that is sometimes the difference between
Heaven and hell. Women often have less
compensation for women than men. If a
woman steps aside from the path of rectitude
man may forgive; woman, never. Woman
will never get justice done for woman's
bailiwick. Neither will she get it from man's
bailiwick. How then? God will rise up for her.
God has more resources than we know of.
The banner word that hangs at the head of
when woman was driven out will cleave
with its terrible edge her oppressors.

But there is something for women to do.
Let young people prepare to exert in spheres
of work and they will be able after awhile to
get larger wages. If it be shown that a
woman can in a store sell more goods in a
year than a man, she will soon be able not
only to ask, but to demand, more wages, and
to demand them successfully. Unskilled
and incompetent labor must take what is
given; skilled and competent labor will
eventually make its own standard. Admit-
ting that the law of supply and demand
regulates these things, I contend that the
demand for skilled labor is very great and
the supply very small. Start with the idea
that

WORK IS HONORABLE

and that you can do some one thing better
than anybody else. Resolve that God help-
ing you will take care of you. If you
are after a while called into another relation
you will all the better be qualified for it by
your spirit of self-reliance; or if you are you
can be happy and self-sustaining. Poets are
fond of talking about men as an oak and
women the vine that climbs it; but I have
seen many a tree fall that not only was
down itself but took all the vine with it. I
can tell you of something stronger than an
oak for an ivy to climb on, and that is the
throne of the Great Jehovah. Single or an-
nointed, that woman is strong who leans on
God and does her best. The needle may
break; the factory hand may slip; the wages

may fail; but over every good woman's heart
there is spread the great, gentle, stipen-
dious wings of the Almighty.

Many of you will go single-handed through
life, and you will have to choose between
two characters. Young woman, I am sure
you will turn your back upon the useless,
giggling, irresponsible nonentity which so-
ciety ignorantly acknowledges to be a
woman, and ask God to make you an hun-
ble, active, earnest Christian. What will
become of that womanly disciple of the
world? She is more thoughtful of the at-
titude she strikes upon the carpet than how
she will look in the judgment; more worried
about her fringing than her sins; more in-
terested in her apparel than in her redemption.
The dying actress, whose life had been vi-
cious, said: "The scene closes; draw the cur-
tain." Generally the tragedy comes first
the farce afterward; but in her life it was
first the farce of a useless life, and then the
tragedy of a wretched death.

Compare the life and death of such a one
with that of some Christian aunt that was
once a blessing to your household. I do not
know that she was ever offered the hand in
marriage. She lived single that untem-
pered life might be every day's blessing.
Whenever the sick were to be visited or the
poor to be provided with bread, she went
with a blessing. She could pray or sing
'Rock of Ages' for any sick pauper who
asked her. As she got older there were days
when she was a little sharp, but for the most
part austere was a sunshine. Just the one for
Christmas eve. She knew better than any
one else how to fix things. Her every prayer,
as God heard it, was full of everybody who
had trouble. The brightest things in all the
house dropped from her fingers. She had
peculiar notions, but the grandest notion
she ever had was to be a Christian. She
dressed well—staid always dressed well—but
her highest adornment was that of a
meek and quiet spirit, which, in the sight of
God, is of great price. When she died you
all gathered lovingly about her; and as you
carried her out to rest the Sunday-school
class almost covered the coffin with japoni-
cas; and the poor people stood at the end of
the alley, with their spouses to their eyes,
sobbing bitterly, and the man of the world
said with Solomon: "Her price was above
rubies," and Jesus, as unto the maiden in
Judea, commanded: "I say unto thee, arise."

VARIEITIES.

The baby's favorite game—I found.

"Hanging on the ragged edge" is now re-
garded "hanging on the slippery brink."

The fellows who are waiting for the office
to seek the man are getting awfully tired.

According to the London Times, the price
of diamonds has steadily fallen from \$15 to
\$8.75 per karat.

The Bible Revision is said to have cost the
University Press of Oxford and Cambridge
more than \$100,000.

A young lady who keeps an autograph al-
bum expressly for male signatures refers to
it as her "him book."

A noted Arabian chieftain, Abdel Kader,
always maintained that the two great ene-
mies of the horse were rest and fat.

France and Greece have 100 holidays an-
nually; Russia 68, Belgium 65, England 54
and the United States 60. These include
Sundays.

A scientist now declares that the tip of
the nose is the home of the soul. It has cer-
tainly often shown where departed spirits
have gone.

A Jamestown, D. T., justice decides that
profanity is not punishable at law when
caused by one's neighbor's hens scratching up
the defendant's garden.

New Jersey sends wife beaters to the pen-
itentiary for one year. It doubtless, however,
allows their wives to send them goodies dur-
ing their imprisonment.

"Yes," observed the widow, "it was rather
a disgrace to have him hanged, but you don't
know what a relief it is for me to know
where he is at night time."

A Cincinnati girl drowned herself just be-
fore she was going to be married. No reason
was given for the deed other than that she
was engaged to a Cincinnati man.

"Hallo, old man, what on earth are you
going to do?" "Dine, of course." "Dine?"
"Why, it's only three o'clock." "I know, my
boy, but it's eight in London."—Life.

When a woman is giving her husband a
bit of her mind he should try to imagine
what it would be like if he was a Mormon,
and was having seventeen such bits served
up to him.

There are about 200,000 commercial trav-
elers in this country. Their average salary
is \$1,500 a year and expenses. Over 25,000
belong to associations for mutual protection,
life insurance, etc.

Fifty-four unfortunate gamblers have de-
stroyed themselves at Monaca this far during
the present season. The Prince's con-
science must be as uncomfortable bed
fellow if he ever considers the source of his
income.

Two girls in Sacramento, Cal., who
thought it would be fun to black their faces,
unfortunately got a coloring preparation
that won't wash off. It acts like dye on the
skin, and chemists say it will probably
not wear off for months.

It has been well announced that anybody,
on either side, prominent or likely to become
so, in Afghanistan was of Irish descent.
Now a Dublin paper states that General
Komaroff's grandfather was an Irishman
of the name of Macnamara.

On the streets of Calhoun, Ga., recently
there were three old men talking together,
all members of the Baptist church, who had
been married seven times, and the aggregate
age of the three was 240 years. All are active
and in good health for men of their age.

In Russia a man must pay his taxes before
he pays the preacher, or doctor, or under-
taker. An American who moves there
miles out of town and the tax gatherer can't
touch him. It is for such blessings as these
that our forefathers fit in the revolution.

The lumber for 45,000 clothes-line cut \$3,
and the clothes pins are worth \$3.50. Four
kinds of saws, a revolving polishing cylinder
of iron and a kiln are requisite for their
manufacture, and the poor creature who
makes them has only 50 per cent. profit
when he sells them for one cent.

The length of the projected railway from
London to Bombay is estimated at nearly
7,000 miles, the route contemplated being
through Paris, Madrid, Gibraltar, Tangier,
Tunis, Tripoli, Basra, Kelat, to Amoy,
and Bombay. It is expected that the journey
will be made in nine days, or an average
of thirty-five miles per hour.

It is estimated that the total stock of gold
in the world in use as coin, or as coin, or as
banking reserves in one shape or other, is
about \$2,818,800,000 of which total, England
has \$912,369,000; France, \$900,000,000; Ger-
many, \$385,800,000; and the United States,
\$447,120,000. Other nations come in for
shares varying from \$3,888,000 in the case of
Holland, to \$147,744,000 in Spain.

The Kansas Supreme Court has been called
upon to decide a point probably never be-
fore raised. It seems that when the jury went
out one of the jurors proposed to open
their deliberations with prayer, and there-
upon proceeded to pray "long and loud."

The verdict was against the defendant,
where upon his lawyer moved to set aside,
on the ground of "undue influence exercised
by one of the jurors by means of public
prayer in the jury-room."